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That Good Old Man

I couldn't tell you just when that was (said James Knox). That was a good many years ago; it was the year the chintz bugs was. I sowed forty-two acres of grain; and I threshed seventy-six bushels. The threshers wouldn't run the rest of it through the machine, for it wouldn't pay 'em, it turned out so poor.

I drewed the grain to Clermont (he continued) and got forty cents a bushel for it. It was twenty miles; ten from where I lived to West Union, and ten from there to Clermont. So the whole trip there and back was forty miles.

I was owing for my place. William Larrabee had bought the mortgage from the man I had give it to. Why, I remember it so well! It was such a thing I never could forget it! He done me such a favor!

When I went in to see Mr. Larrabee, he asked me what he could do for me. I was trembling so's I couldn't hardly shake hands. I told him he had some notes I'd signed; and he looked and found 'em. I told him just how it was; that I couldn't pay anything, and I'd come down to see what was going to be done about it — what he was calculating to do with me.

"It's pretty hard for me to tell what I will be doing," he answered me. "I don't know what to do

with a man that'll come to see me and not try to dodge me", said he.

While he was looking at the notes he asked me: "Did you know that these notes are drawing ten per cent?"

"Yes sir." I said, "but I had to pay that in order to get my place."

"Isn't that pretty high interest?" he asked me then.

"Well, it does seem so to me," I said.

He took his pen and drewed it right through the ten per cent, and wrote eight in place of it.

"Now that will help you some, Mr. Knox, and you can go home and you needn't lose any sleep over it. I'll carry you till you can pay."

And then he asked me whether I had enough to live on. I believe he meant to give me that if I'd needed it to get through. I told him I believed I had enough to carry me so long as I didn't have to pay him what was due. I couldn't hardly wait till I'd get home to tell the woman what luck I'd had. That good old man!

Next year I happened to have good luck and paid him everything. When we shook hands and said good-bye I told him that if it ever came in my way to do anything for him I'd help him all I could.

A few years later when he was running for Governor I went down to Randalia early in the morning on election day. Some of them made the remark that he was a "money shark".

I told my story and just let 'em know what he'd done for me. I got some votes for him. They said if he was that kind of a man they'd vote for him. I stayed all day; you could electioneer them days.

I guess (interposed Mrs. Knox) if Mr. Larrabee or any of his family were running for office, Mr. Knox and all his family would work for them.

I was down to Clermont (resumed Mr. Knox) and I went to that schoolhouse he built. His picture was hanging there, and I looked at it, and I tell you the tears was a-falling. That good old man! I can't never forget what he done for me.

DANIEL M. PARKER